State Senator

VALDE GARCIA

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Serving the 22ⁿᵈ District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

Coffee Break News

Senate acts to grow Michigan's economy

The Senate this week passed a venture capital package to help make Michigan more attractive to business investment as part of the Republicans' JOBS plan. JOBS-- - Job Opportunities for Business Success - is an initiative put forth by House and Senate Republicans to revitalize the Michigan economy and get its residents back to work. Venture capital allows entrepreneurs to start businesses, frequently high-tech ventures, and create the jobs of tomorrow.

Michigan currently ranks 34th among the 50 states in venture capital investments. The majority of high-tech industrial states rank well above Michigan. Most Great Lakes states outrank Michigan as well, including Minnesota (16th), Pennsylvania (17th), Illinois (18th), Ohio (31st), and Wisconsin (32nd). The venture capital package now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Senate calls for manufacturing, small-business "czars" as part of JOBS plan

The Michigan Senate this week passed legislation to create "czars" to help manufacturers and small businesses cut through red tape. Senate Bills 840 and 841 call on the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to provide a small-business "czar" and a manufacturing "czar" with the experience and vision to focus on small-business start-ups, as well as retaining and creating manufacturing jobs. The bills now go to the House for consideration.

Recycling package introduced

In an effort to make Michigan a top recycling state, legislation has been introduced to design a comprehensive statewide recycling program. Michigan currently ranks near the bottom of all states with just a 20-percent recycling rate. The package is a result of recommendations from the Michigan Beverage Container and Recycling Task Force to stimulate statewide recycling. Among the bills are provisions to create a new litter incentive program that allows individuals to qualify for a cash award if they provide information leading to a conviction under the anti-litter statute. A state anti-litter hotline to allow an individual to make a report on litter violations also would be created. The legislation also would make changes to the Adopt-a-Trail, Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Shoreline and Adopt-a-River programs to allow volunteer groups to report on the volume and type of waste they collect.

Land Bank Fast Track

Members of the Michigan Senate will soon consider a six-bill package to aid urban redevelopment. The Land Bank Fast Track package, House Bills 4480-4484 and 4488, will establish an authority to clear property titles and move tax reverted property to private ownership. The legislation creates a process for abandoned properties to be redeveloped by providing a funding source. In lieu of general property tax for land returned to private ownership, the legislation creates a tax with 50 percent going to the local communities and the other half making the authority self-supporting.

New specialty license plate

Michigan motorists may soon have another option for a specialty license plate under a bill passed this week in the Senate. A state-sponsored fund-raising plate for the Michigan chapter of Ducks Unlimited would be created and sold by the Secretary of State for an additional $25. The money received from the sale of these plates will be used by the non-profit organization to protect, enhance, restore, manage and acquire wetlands and associated uplands in this state. This plate joins seven other state-sponsored fund-raising plates and 15 university sponsored plates.

In addition, a bill establishing new criteria that organizations must meet in order to create a new specialty plate was passed by the Senate and reported out of the House Transportation Committee recently. This bill is designed to prevent Michigan taxpayers from paying start-up costs for specialty plates that may not sell and to prevent confusion in the law enforcement community by requiring plates to meet a standard format.